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1917

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PENCILLED POEMS

By RAY G. DANDRIDGE





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Penciled Poems

By
Ray G. Dandridge

Cincinnati, Ohio

1917

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RAY G. DANDRIDGE
CINCINNATI, O.

DEC 24 1917

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DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER

MRS. E. C. DANDRIDGE

THE FAIREST GEMS

Men often long for gems so rare,
And sometimes for a maiden fair;
Some crave wealth to give them power,
So they may be called—"men of the hour";
But while we strive to reach so high,
We find the Gems we cannot buy—
The fairest ones on God's green earth,
The precious mothers that gave us birth.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN—

Having been confined to bed since July 4, 1912, Raymond Garfield Dandridge is not only an invalid, but also a bound-down "shut in," unable to use either limb or right arm.

In spite of this great handicap, he penciled these verses, remained optimistic, and says, "'Tis good to make the best of it."

Cincinnati, December 1, 1917

POWELL & WHITE,
Printers.



RAY G. DANDRIDGE

THE DUMB SOLDIER

With flying rein, a frothing steed,
Bearing an empty saddle ;
Dashed to and fro along the line,
Amid the din of battle.
The hand that guided him for years,
That stroked his flowing mane ;
Still clutching to a saber hilt,
Lies cold out on the plain.

A roaring hell on every side,
Like hail, the shot fell round ;
A blinding flash, a piercing neigh ;
Ned trembled ; then went down.
The bugle sounded loud, "The Charge !"
He raised his gallant head,
Then laid it on the sod again,
Another soldier—dead.

LIFE'S CIRCUS

All earth is a Circus Ground,
The sky above a tent,
And everyone a part must play
While Life is being spent.
A vast host make the audience,
Who laugh at the merry rounds ;
While many are Life's Acrobats,
Life's Ring masters, and Clowns.

Life's Circus has the widest scope
Of freaks, at her command ;
She has the greatest animals,
She has the largest band.
All Carnivals and Pageants grand,
When they have been arrayed,
Must bare their heads in reverence to
Life's Circus, on parade.

MAH DAWG

Why's you tryin' to kick ole Robah,
Whut on earf he done to you?
Bettah thank yore stars you mist him;
Else yo'd had to kick me, too;
He cain't talk to maik etscuses,
But, I's heah to taik his part;
An' yore pickin' on a po' dawg
Sho's de meanness in yore heart.

Shet yore mouf! don' you dar say it!
Yo's ez good a man ez me;
Yo's a ha'f raised, uncouf buzzard,
Jes ni' nothin' ez kin be.
I know well I stoops to fight you,
But, it's hi' ni' stoopin' time,
W'en a lo' down, ornree scoundell,
Tries to kick dat dawg ob mine.

Dat houn' pup jes big an' playful
He thought you wor playful, too,
But, w'en you com'enst yore kickin'
Thin's tuk on a differn' view.
You sho's plain yo's out fo' battle,
'Speck it won't be hard to fine,
Hebbin knows yo's bidin' fo' it
W'en you kick dat dawg ob mine.

Whuts you say? Yo's onlee funin';
Ef you wuz, I's mighty glad;
Kaze I lub to lub mah neighbah,
An' stan' 'hole heaps fo' I's mad.
Lets shake han's lak good ole Buddies,
Evahthin' done turnt out fine;
We'll all three go home togeddah,
You, me, an' dat dawg ob mine.

Aftah we done ett our suppah,
Tipped off wid a tater pie ;
Talk, it drifted sorta sad lak,
'Bout Heah Aftah, bye an' bye ;
Remuss sed, "we'd know each uddah,
In dat Meetin' House, sublime";
An' I growed rail melonkollee,
Thinkin' 'bout dat dawg ob mine.

Wondah, ef I ast St. Peter
Woulden he let Robah in ?
Ef I 'splain dat he's bin hones'
An' his heart am free frum sin ;
Wondah, how he'd look aslyin'
Thoo dem Holy Realms, divine ;
An, 'ef dar's a Golden Kennel
Waitin' fo' dat dawg ob mine ?

MOTHER

When you were but a little child
With many faults to cover ;
Who hid them all behind her smile ?
Your mother, your dear mother.

When out in this cold world, unkind,
You fall, can go no further ;
Who picks you up, shakes off the grime ?
Your mother, your dear mother.

Proud sister turns her back, 'tis true,
So does your dad and brother ;
Who never fails to welcome you ?
Your mother, your dear mother.

Your mother's praise forever sing !
You'll never have another ;
They duplicate most everything,
Except your darling mother.

GOOD EVERYWHERE

There's gladness in the sunshine,
There's gladness in the rain;
From yonder tree the little bird
Chirps out a glad refrain.

All things of earth know happiness,
There's nothing always sad,
And everything contains some good,
There's naught that's wholly bad.

Try taking good from goodness,
Take gladness from the glad,
And ere long you will find yourself
Taking much good from bad.

FO YORESELF

Kin dat be Miss Mandy Jenkins
Cumin' yondah thoo de gate?
Might ni white ez airy white chile,
Hair alayin' slick an' straight;
W'en I lef' her, she wuz broun skin,
An' her haid wuz flufee, too;
Mebbe it's mah eyes dat's failin'
Sho nuff Mandy, am dat you?

You sho walks jes lak Miss Mandy,
An' you jes Miss Mandy's size,
An' yore figgah 'zembles Mandy's,
Dem eyes dance lak Mandy's eyes;
Bust em back an' show dem ivories!
You kaint fool me ef you smile;
Neb your mind, dem feets betrays you,
Cose you is mah angel chile.

Mandy, darlin', whut's de mattah?
Honey baby, don' you cry;
Did whut I sed hu't yore feelin's?
Diden aim to; hope to die.
Bless yore heart, I's onlee kidin'
'Bout yore 'plexshun, an' yore hair
Be ez striped ez de rain bo',
So it's you, dat's all I care.

Say dem words agin, Bill Bundy!
Say you lub me, kaze it's me!
Seems lak dey put new life in me,
Maik mah heart beat fas' an' free.
I etmits et furst you peeved me,
I wuz so', an' so' fo' true,
Kaze I spent mah dollah, six bits,
Beautifyin', jes' fo' you.

But, it's worth all dat I spended,
It's worth mo' to heah dem words,
Fo' dey's much mo' sweetah music
Dan de chune ob hummin' birds;
You lub Mandy, kaze it's Mandy!
Week days, an' a Sunday, too;
Well, den listen 'till I tells you
How much Mandy thinks ob you.

Billie, I jes lubs an' lubs you!
Yo 's so diffen' frum de res',
An' dar's somethin' 'bout you draws me,
It's yore winnin' ways, I guess.
All de day long yo's befo' me,
An' et night you hant mah dreams,
Wild erbout you dressed on Sunday,
Crazy 'bout you in yore geans!

ANTE BELLUM SYMPHONY

Stop dat racket! Whar's yore manna's?
don' you heah dat minor part?
Seems jes lak dem kords am bindin'
blesset sweetness to mah heart;
Watch old Jerry press de cat gut, Goo' Lawd!
how he draw dat bo;
Wondah do de harps in Glory, play
dat sweet, an' sof', and lo'?

Heah dat 'lodious mouf orgin, ain' it sweetnin?
tell de truf!
An' it sets de 'hole place ringin'
frum de callah to de roof;
Rufus Simpson knows his banjo, knows
it ebah string an' fret;
Maiks it almos' beg fo' mercy,
maiks it pant, an' blo', an' sweat.

You kin talk erbout Gran' Opra, 'bout de
concerts, an' de birds;
But, w'en Carolina warbles; 'tain't
no 'spressin' it in words;
She kin sing de "Swanee Ribbah," till
you see it flowin' by,
An' she sings "Asleep in Jesus," till
de tears stan' in yore eye.

Hopes dat you ain' 'fended Sambo, kase I
lef' you to de las',
Wid yore rattlin' bones, an' tambo, ain'
no way to let you pass;
Man! you adds de rip, de tip, tip!
an' you ancer fo' de drums,
Why, dey c'u'den do widout you,
w'en de Gran' Finale cums.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Alas, the willing hands are stilled
In death; their toil on earth is done.
From plow to pen a task they filled,
Well earned repose, they won.

Long years he struggled uphill amid strife,
On, on to the wave crest of fame,
And stood at the Zenith of useful life,
When the Grim Reaper's summons came.

The messenger found him at work in the field
Of progress, where long he had lead.
With harvest time nigh, and a bountiful yield,
They whispered—he is dead.

MY PILOT

In dead hours of night when my oil burns low,
Jesus will pilot me;
When the thunder peals and the wild winds blow,
Jesus will pilot me;
All through the night and all through the day,
No matter where I may be,
He rightens my footsteps, lest I stray away,
Jesus will pilot me.

When lost on the deep and the waves run high,
Jesus will pilot me;
My compass is broken; my mast goes by;
Jesus will pilot me;
When it seems my bark to the bottom must go
And I shall be lost in the sea,
I placed my faith in Him, for I know
Jesus will pilot me.

THE DOWN ROAD

Down the road going down, a man stumbles on,
Lax of spirit and sadly dismayed.
No one to console him; 'ere long he is gone;
In the shadow he lurks half afraid.
The future holds naught, the past barren lies,
Sobs take his breath, tears dim his eyes;
He stumbles, he falls; can he do otherwise,
On the down, down road?

If you see a man on the down, down road,
Try to brace him with kindness and cheer;
Your smile and your presence will lighten his load,
It may aid him to know you are near.
It is easy to smile when the outlook is bright,
It is easy to run when the impost is light,
But we find it hard to do just what is right,
On the down, down road.

The same circumstance that is keeping him down,
Might have put you or me in his place;
Throw out the "Life Line," don't let him drown!
Give him a chance to retrace.
The man worth while does not criticize,
There is hope for the one underneath, 'till he dies;
Lend him a hand and perhaps he will rise,
From the down, down road.

FORWARD

Forward, every son and daughter
Born of Ethiopia's hue!
Band yourselves in mighty union,
To be or not, depends on you.
Harken to the call of "Freedom!"
Marshal in "Ambition's" tread,
Let no crafty foe retard you
'Till you're marching at the head!

Set your "Goal Post" in the "Zenith,"
Seek the shining spots on high,
Swear to be no other's bondman,
Ere you cringe—resolve to die.
Crown each moment with your effort,
From the dawn to setting sun,
Every one must do his duty
Ere the "Victory" is won!

THE BEST OF IT

When oppressed on every side,
Or caught in the receding tide,
Or dashed along, to who knows where;
With naught in sight but blank despair.
When sorrow's shadow hovers round,
There is no sunshine to be found;
Complaining does not help a bit,
Try hard to make the best of it!

When everything piles up on you,
Your health is gone, your money too;
The undercurrent drags you down,
No help is nigh, seems you must drown.
Those who promised to be true,
When trouble came, deserted you;
All else has fled, cling to your grit—
You have to make the best of it.

Lo! at last the dark clouds sever,
No good or bad can live forever;
See your horizon clear again,
And all the brighter since the rain;
While good fortune smiles on you,
Be honest, upright, staunch and true,
And to your fellow-men admit
'Tis good to make the best of it.

THE PRODIGAL

Lawd, Howdy boy! whar hab you bin?
Goo'ness! but yo's lookin' thin,
An' it's bin two yeah or mo'
Since you darked yore mammie's do'.
Now, yo's done cum back to me,
Stranded, huntin' sympathee;
Hongree, ragged, tired an' busted,
Heavy hearted, plum' disgusted.

W'en you lef' yore deares' fren',
Diden I, diden I tole you den,
Dat you nevah fine anuddah,
Stick clos' to you lak yore muddah?
Ain' I sed, "dat Sallie Cain
Lub you wid her might an' main,
Go long wid you all thoo life
Han' in han' yore fai'fful wife?"

You sed, "dis ole burg wuz small,"
Loud, you heard de city's call;
You knowed 'zac'lee whut to do,
De city's life; de life fo' you.
Yore hard head done tuk you away,
Tired feets brung you back to-day,
'Spect now yo'll be satisfied
Right heah on de countree side.

Ain' you sed, "dat yo'd return
Totin money nuff to burn?"
An' all yo's brung is baggin' knees,
An' a fringe on yore coat sleeves.
Dat dar looseness roun' yore wais',
An' dem hollahs in yore face,
Don' sho' no prosperitee
Les' de sign's deceivin' me.

Mebbe you foun' out by now
Dat dar's pleasure hine de plow,
Lis'nin' to de Jinnee squeal,
While you harrah up de feil'.
Whut's it mattah 'bout yore han's,
Ef yore heart meets all deman's,
An' yore conscience clear an' bright,
Lets you sleep in peace et night?

Sall's still got her maiden name,
Talks heaps ob you jes de same,
Turnt down Lafe, an' Rastus, too;
Satisfied to wait on you.
Gals lak Sall am hard to fine,
Nowdays, lub ain' ha'f so bline;
Bettah lead her by de han'
To de squire, or preachah man.

Cryin'! is you cryin', son?
Cum heah, kiss yore mammie, hon;
Squar' dem shoulders, up yore face!
You ain' done no rail disgrace.
Don' you know yore maw lub you
Maik no diffur whut you do,
An' dat "Welcome" on de wall,
Means you, sonny, fust ob all?

LITTLE THINGS

If the generous God of Fortune has delt you a sunny sky,
And your lot is free from sorrow, pain and strife,
Straightway seek your brother, who the world is passing by;
Tell him there is hope while there is life!

Secretly and tenderly go aid the fault'ring one.
'Twill do you good to see his spirit mount;
The show you make don't demonstrate the good that you have
done;
So often it's the "little things" that count.

CLOSE' MOUF

Whar's I bin, who wants to know?
No one's bissness whar I go;
I's three sebens, an' den sum,
Plenty ole to go an' cum
Whar I wants, an' when I please,
'Sides you hab a heap ob cheese,
Ax me mo' dan mah own kin,
None yore bissniss! whar I bin!

Since you think dat you so smart,
I'll jes tell you fo' you start,
Ain' no chance to pick frum me,
Whar I's bin, or gwine to be;
When I leab yo'll know de same
Dat you did befo' I came;
Keen on pickin' yo'll git fat
Tryin' to figgah whar I's at.

Ef you jes sed, look heah Phil.
Ain' you bin down hine de mill,
Tryin' to coax de little bones
To de seben, leben tones?
'Stead you used yore strategy,
Tried to pick it out ob me,
Set yore cunnin' little trap,
Thought I'd say, I's shootin' crap.

Figgahed you c'u'd git frum me,
Dat Sol, an' Gabe, an' Honey Lee,
An' me, an' tightwad Henree Lane,
Had a little social game;
Thought I'd tell you, Honey Lee
Skint de 'hole croud, 'sepin' me,
An' dat po' ole Henree Lane,
Eben hocked his watch an' chain.

Wise ole fox, jes keep on pickin'.
Whut you git frum dis heah chicken
Yo'll be welcome to, I guess;
Bettah go try some de res'.
Broach ole Sol or Gabriel Jones,
He de man dat own de bones;
Else, ast Hen or Honey Lee,
Dey'll 'fess, long fo' close' mouf me.

HOME

Fancy bore me on her wing
Far away;
To fond haunts, where mem'ries cling;
Far away.
Loving tenderness and grace
Shown on every smiling face,
'Round that dear familiar place,
Far away.

I could see the shady dell,
Far away;
See my little Pardner, Nell,
Far away;
See my sister and my brother,
Yes, God bless her, see another,
With her arms outstretched, my Mother;
Far away.

I could hear the church bell ringing
Far away;
Hear the choir sweetly singing,
Far away;
See my final place of rest,
'Mid the ones that I love best,
In the church yard on the crest;
Far away.

JELLO

(Apologies to Harry and Murdock Williams)

Dat ar triflin' trash ain' nothin',
Wid no sence ob decencee ;
Stan' right up befo' de company,
Shibbah—Shibbah—Shib—bah—ree ;
Why, it kaint keep still a minute,
Wiggle, wabble, ebah chance,
Nervuss don' begin to 'scribe it,
Ax mo' lak "St. Vitus Dance."

Some folks maik it differn colors,
Some calls it a differn name,
But de chance am slim to fool you
Kaze it all ax jes de same.
W'en yo 's ett it, yo 's ez empty
Ez you would be, uddahwise ;
Less you got some satisfackshun
Goin' thoo de exercise.

I sho laks mah pies an' puddin's,
Lubs mah custard an' mah float ;
Crazy 'bout good cake an' cookies,
Ice cream captalvates mah goat.
But heah late de "Jix" is on me,
Else I's got some black cat's luck,
Kaze mos' ebah whar I's 'vited,
Dey han' me dat "tremblin' truck."

A POUND OF LIFE

An ounce of sunshine, one of rain,
An ounce of pleasure and of pain,
An ounce of faith, an ounce of fears,
An ounce of mirth, an ounce of tears,
An ounce of love and one of care,
An ounce of hope, one of despair,
Of laughter, heartache, comfort, strife ;
The total sum—"a pound of life."

AWAKE

Awake, my sleeping Ethiopia ;
Proclaim inheritance thine own !
Fan thy smold'ring embers
Into quick'ning flame, to rid the dross
And purify thy better self.
Ever onward mighty millions
Mount, yon elevated plane !
Within thyself, thou hast
The power to rise, and risen
Stand ! in union firm.
Behold ! fulfilment of His promise ;
Thy "Triumphant Star" ascendeth in the sky,
The Ermine, Crown and Sceptre are awaiting
Thy "Coronation Day" is drawing nigh.

THINKIN' SPOOKS

Evah feal a sicknin' fright,
In de wee, wee hours ob night,
W'en dar's nary soul in sight,
'Cept de spook, dat's in yore mine ?

Evah hab yore heart stop, still,
An' yore back bone all a chill,
W'en de shadah on de hill,
Match de spook dat's in yore mine ?

Hab you evah quicked yore pace,
W'en you pass a lonesome place,
Lak you gwine to run a race,
Wid de spook dat's in yore mine ?

Den agin, hab you felt brave,
Loud to be no mo' a slave,
To de daid dat's in de grave,
An' de spook, dat's in yore mine ?

BACHELORS

Jes two strapin' he'lfee boys,
Bob an' me;
Full ob fun an' full ob noise
Bob an' me.
Lubed to rip, an' rant, an' play,
Always happy, free an' gay,
In de mo'nin' ob Life's day
Bob an' me.

On to-geddah, all thoo school,
Bob an' me;
Honah pupils, ez a rule,
Bob an' me.
On de fiel', or in a tes',
We would do our lebel bes',
An' we'd one, two, all de res',
Bob an' me.

Woulden' cheat an' didn' try,
Bob an' me;
Diden' fight, or argufy,
Bob an' me.
Diden' squabble, didn' cuss,
Nevah had a single fuss,
Dat we didn' patch, 'tween us,
Bob an' me.

We wuz well ni' 'bout eighteen,
Bob an' me;
W'en de furst strife cum between
Bob an' me.
To our town dar came a girl,
Dat chile's name wuz Mattie Pearl,
An' she set us bof a whirl,
Bob an' me.

We thought she wuz mighty sweet,
 Bob an' me;
Loud she wuz a dream, complete;
 Bob an' me.
In her eyes de lub light shown,
Neadah would let her erlone,
We bof claimed her fo' our own,
 Bob an' me.

Den we called on her one day,
 Bob an' me;
Jes to heah whut she'd to say,
 Bob an' me.
Bof cain't win you, one mus' lose,
One mus' hab de "weary blues";
So we's cum fo' you to choose,
 Bob an' me.

On her lips we seed a smile,
 Bob an' me;
We bof sed, "God bless dat chile,"
 Bob an' me.
Seemed her eyes shown lak de sun,
We'n she sed, "dar's no harm done,
Woulden' hab you, eaddah one,"
 Bob an' me.

Time done made us bof ole men,
 Bob an' me;
But, we's still each uddah's fren,
 Bob an' me.
Guess we made a rail good match,
'Ten's our little garden patch,
Libes togeddah, an' we batch;
 Bob an' me.

FIFTY-FIFTY

I 'ten'ed a campane speakin'
Et de Town Hall uddah night,
Heard de canadate fo' office,
Frail his 'ponett lef' an' right.
He called him a lo' down scoundrel,
A graftah, fraud an' bum :
Tole us ef he gits elected
Sho nuff hard time boun' to cum.

He sed, "he'd be po' man's fren',
He'l 'up fo' capital, too ;
Loud ef he gits elected
He would put de issue thoo."
Sed, "he would ile de turn pike,
Remodel de ole jail,
Put mo' dough in de envelope,
An' cram de dinnah pail."

"He gits mah vote," I sez, sez I,
An' lef' dar, satisfied ;
But on mah way agoin' home,
Annuddah crowd I spied ;
Dey had a brass ban' an' red fire,
Right in de Market Square ;
An' dar de uddah canadate
Spoke in de open air.

Wid bof his feets, he jumped right on
De fellah, I jes heard,
An' called him ebahthin' dats bad,
Omittin' nary word.
He sed, "a man dat vote fo' Smif
Be sorry ebah mo',
An' tole us dat he got his start,
By preyin' on de po'."

He sed, "he knuckled to no man,
No special set, or creed;
An' felt lak all dem dat's oppressed,
An' boun' down, should be freed."
He promised us prosperity,
De mills run day an' night,
An' loud he had no aim in life
'Cept treatin' uddahs right.

I walked rail slo' agoin' home,
Tried hard to dope it out;
Fo' Smif had sho painted Jones black,
Jones blacken Smif, no doubt;
I went to bed an' slep' on it,
Riz wid de mo'nin' sun,
An' figguhed it jes waistin' time,
To vote fo' eaddah one.

GRAMMAH

Trus' you wid mah secret, Eli; ain' nobody else I'd tell;
I's bin ten'in' Publick Night School, de teachah sez, I does
right well;
I finds Fissack Kulcher easy, I kin write, an' I kin draw,
But in Grammah I's de biges' lunatic wid in de Law.

W'en we hab a class in Readin', I banks on a rail good mark;
Figgahs! figgahs calls me Pappy! an' dey know me in de dark,
An' de Spellin's made to order, I's de king ob "Spellin' Bee";
But de pro'nouns an' dem adverbs hab a heap ob fun wid me.

Las' night I sed, "'twas he an' me," dat's I called mahse'f, me.
De teachah sed, dat I wuz wrong; I should sed I, you see;
Ob course, I knows de teachah know, so I inten' to try,
Al dough it sho hurts me to say, please han' it heah to I.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Stand exalted ! martyred Lincoln
Example of triumphant march
From humble birth,
To First Chair of the land.
Your deeds, a glowing tribute
To success ; honorably achieved,
By honest man
Despite the overwhelming odds.
Your words, like Phoenix,
Rise, o'er and o'er again,
From embers just their own,
And herald wisdom broadcast unto all.

A GHOST STORY

Ve jes pushed back frum our suppah, sweeten taters baked
wid poke,
V'en somebody started beggin', deah Ant Dina, 'tell a joke ;
Or, else spin a yarn dat's frightin', or some strange out lan'ish
tale,
Bout de mystic spooks an' goblins, or how Jonah fooled de
whale.

Den Ant Dina 'tole de chill'en, ef dey gaddah roun' reel clos',
he would tell dem de true story, 'bout Lem Lawson an' his
ghost ;
an' she started et de 'ginnin', tole how Lem, a se'fish crank,
Oiden' trus' a soul aliben, wouldn' eben trus' de bank.

He libed fo' se'f, all by hisse'f, way down in Jackson's hollah,
an' in a ches' beneaf de flo' he hid 'way many a dollah.
Till finelee bad men cumed one day an' foun' his hidden' place ;
dey tuk his money, ches, an' all, an' nevah lef' no trace.

Dat night w'en po' Lem cum home, he brung a kupple mo',
to hide 'way ermong de res', in de ches' beneaf de flo' ;
but, w'en he foun' his money gone, he cussed bof lef' an' right ;
his hair turned frum a raven black to snowy white dat night.

He tuk a chair, sot right down, crossways ob de do',
Sleabs rolled up an' on his lap dar lay a fo'tee-fo';
He sot thar twenty days an' nights, dat's whut de neighbahs
sed;
An' nevah ett or drunk a drap; one day dey foun' him, dead.

Aftah while some strangah folks moved on Lawson's place,
An' w'en we tole em 'bout Lem's ghost, dey laff right in our
face;
Called us fogey, tole us we bes' keep de 'vise we's givin',
Dat dey had no feah fo' de dead; an' much less fo' de libin.

Dem sma't Ellicks went to bed, but jes long 'bout midnight,
Ole Lem's ghost cum prowlin' 'roun'—it certnee served 'em
right;
An' w'en dat ghost in low tone sed, "you thief, put back mah
money!"
De joke tuk on a differn look, an' thin's warn't ha'f so funny.

Aldough dey wuz so all fired brave an' didn' feah de dead,
Dey lef' mos' ebahthin' behine, dat mo'nin' w'en dey fled;
An' I knows well an' certain' dat dey tuk de furstes' train,
An' swo' dey'd nevah sot a foot in dese heah parts again.

Nex' day de Sheriff hanged a sign down in de Market Space,
Reward in gold, fo' airy man dat stays on Lawson's place;
Since den a many man hab tried, but nary singel soul
Has evah stayed dar all night long, so dey c'u'd get de gold.

In kase yo's out reel late et night an' Lem's ghost do appeah,
Tain't no use hollahin' he'p! or drapin' dead ob feah;
But jes' you walk straight backwards 'till you has counted
nine,
Den maik a cross, turn reel slo' roun'; dat am de voodoo sign.

An' den you go right on yore way, an' don' you feah no harm,
No powah on earf kin hurt you w'en po'tected by de charm;
An' now dat I has tole a tale accordin' to yore wishes,
Heah, Hezekiah! taik dis towel an' dry yore auntie's dishes!

HOME AND MOTHER

I had a rail good, easy job,
valet fo' Mr. Lee;
An' trabeled wid him mos' de time,
in style an' luxury;
It looks lak I'd be satisfied, but
somehow I'd get blue,
Athinkin' 'bout mah country home,
an' mah dead muddah, too.

I's bin to London, seed de Thames,
aslippin' to de sea,
An' frum de Mediterranean, seen
sunny Italy;
Done saw de Alpine's snow-capped
peaks, de Cata Combs ob Rome;
But sabe mah soul, I jes' kaint find
no place lak mah home.

Done bin to China, India, too; met
Japs, an' Senghaleese,
In Turkey saw de Sultan pass
his subjects on dere knees;
Seen palaces wid golden tho'nes,
whar monarchs reign supreme;
Still in de th'one room ob dis heart,
mah muddah am de queen.

Bin mong de wheat fields ob de norf,
down souf seed sugah cain;
Done bin frum California's slopes to
chilly sho's ob Maine;
In fact, I's bin mos' ebah whar,
furst one place, den anuddah,
Still I ain't foun' no place lak home,
an' no one lak mah muddah.

TRUTH

Soiled and stained, a page in Life's Book,
I tore from its place:
Next, I found a chapter smirched;
It, too, I would erase.
Those shady spots have spoiled my book,
Can I the wrongs undo,
If, in rewriting, I omit
The ugly parts, I rue?
If I go where I am unknown,
To some strange distant land,
Where no one knows of "wild oats" sown,
Where I know not a man:
Should I deceive a world of men,
And bury deep my sin,
Am I not loser in the end?
It is not hid from Him.
Conscience cried, "Replace that leaf!
Before I brand you, liar, thief,
Withdraw your cloven hoof and naked tooth!
Lay your false thought on yonder shelf,
Be honest with the world and self,
Far fairest of all virtue is the Truth."

REINCARNATION

They tell me I have lived before,
Trode this old earth in days of yore,
An elephant, or garter snake.
Can this be true, for goodness sake?
If spirits flit from things to things,
From insects into hearts of kings;
Perhaps I may have been a whale,
Or just a creeping slimy snail.
Once a porupine, then horse, now man.
Far more than I can understand.
Though my past forms are naugh to me,
The rub is what I next will be.

BLACKS IN BLUE

In Revolutionary days
A struggling nation, young,
Sent out a call for volunteers
With powder-horn and gun;
When Betsy Ross unfurled the flag
They vowed to die or do,
And marched with Green in Jersey,
A few brave Blacks in Blue.

In the "War of Eighteen-twelve,"
With Perry they stood well,
To save the day at New Orleans
They fought, they bled, and fell;
In "Indian Wars" they took a part,
Helped make the "Iron clad's" crew,
They never took a backward step;
Courageous Blacks in Blue.

In the "War of the Rebellion,"
Ethiopia's son were there;
Readily they served their country,
Willingly they did their share.
Their battle cry was "Victory!"
They knew no Waterloo;
They cheered aloud 'mid bursting shell,
Fearless Blacks in Blue.

In the cruel "Civil War,"
Far worse than all others;
Fathers fought against their sons,
And brothers fought their brothers.
At Gettysburg and Bloody Run,
Their bleeding bodies strew
The battlefield, to others free;
Unflinching Blacks in Blue.

In Cuba and the Philippines
Their deeds of valor won,
Remember how they rescued
The Colonel, at San Juan;
Above a block house on the hill
They raised their "colors true,"
Then lent aid to the shattered "Sixth"—
Gallant Blacks in Blue.

In Nineteen-sixteen with Old Glory
They marched into Mexico;
And at Carrizal, outnumbered,
Bravely faced a deadly foe;
The acid test of time has tried them,
Tried and found them solid, through,
And there never was a traitor
Found among the Blacks in Blue.

DR. MASON

Broad-minded, far-seeing champion so brave,
A nation sheds hot tears for you;
The Pilot, who boarded a doomed ship to save,
The soul of an awe-stricken crew.

Scholar, guardian, brother to men,
His whole life embedded in work;
For others he labored to life's very end,
No man ever knew him to shirk.

Gallant, courageous, unselfish in thought,
Foremost in his mind dwelt the cause;
Around us we see many wonders he wrought,
Never ceasing 'till death bade him pause.

Composed, alert, unafraid on that day,
Watched the shadows of earth growing dim;
Heard a voice from afar calling, "Come, don't delay!"
Saw a finger above beckon him.

TURN'T ERROWN'

Las' Sunday mo'nin', ha'f pas' eight,
Wid fishin' pole an' can ob bait,
I met de good ole decon, Jackson Bole ;
Sez he to me, "look heah, youn' man,
Whut has you hab in dat ar' can,
An' whar you gwine wid dat bamboo pole?"

I stood dar feelin' mighty small,
Kaze I had nary 'scuse et all ;
De decon he done cotched me dead to right ;
Inste'd ob'tentin' Sunday School,
Aslippin' to de fishin' pool,
He tole me dat I stood in mah own light.

Den in his slo' offhan'ed way,
De right an' wrong befo' me lay,
An' tole me whut a man mah pap had bin ;
Lowd he knowed well mah pap would rave,
Would turn plum obah in his grave,
Ef he knowed I comited sech a sin.

Den he sed, "Sonny, if you wish,
Dar's six 'hole days dat you kin fish.
An' onlee one dat breaks de Marstah's rule ;
So, why not cum go 'long wid me
An' git salvashun while it's free,
Or would you raddah be de debbel's tool?"

I grabed holt Jackson by de han',
Tole him dat I laked his stan',
Draped mah fishin' pole an' can ob bait ;
Ax him please take me erlong
Wid him to jine dat do right throng
Dats marchin' onward to de Golden Gate.

A LEADER

Give us a man! who takes a stand and fights;
Who cringes not, contending for his rights,
Who holds his Cause above all personal gain,
And boldly bids for place in world's acclaim.

Give us a man! who looks beyond to-day,
Who finds the hidden haunts where dangers lay;
Who leaves no stone unturned, 'till he
Has led his forces on, triumphantly!

Give us a man! who sees beyond his nose,
Who wails not o'er spilt milk or passing woes;
Whose courage spark no flaunter's threat can dim,
And we will gladly follow after him.

ASHES OF LOVE

Lost far beyond voice of recall, lost is Life's richest prize;
The merry song in discord falls, the sunlight dims and dies.
Fond precious treasure, priceless Love! naught e'er can take
your place;

The field of pleasure you were once, to-day is barren waste.

Like midnight's pleasant dream you fled, you left me thus,
alone;

With my eyes welled in scalding tears and heavy heart of
stone;

O cruel Fate! please tell me why you dealt the wicked blow;
Why did you give me it to lose; why did you treat me so?

Is there no place for weary souls, who would no longer stay,
Where all they ever sought to hold, was rudely torn away?
When Love's bright fire is cold and dead, ashes remain, no
doubt;

Remain to mock an aching heart; "Ashes of Love" burned out.

HEARTBROKEN

Sorrow, suffering,
Misery, pain ;
Soul-racking torture,
Again, and again.
Near stifling sobs,
Deep piercing sighs,
Fast falling tears
Burning my eyes.
Alas—it is broken,
I hold the parts ;
Is there a tinker
Who mends broken hearts ?

“While enlarging the capital “I” remember, the tops of to-day are often the bottoms of to-morrow.”

“When you have aimed high, aim higher ; when you have done your duty, do a bit more.”

THE BRAGGARD

I sho' dislak a man dat feels
Lak he's aturnin' all de wheels,
An' ef his little mill shets down,
Den dis 'hole worl' quit goin' roun' ;
Dar's plenty good men cumin' on,
An' heaps dat's done bin heah, an' gone,
So I ain' bragin', undahstan',
I's meerlee talkin', man to man.

I taiks good care ob whut I git,
Does mah bes' to maik en's fit ;
Patch mah klose, ha'f sole mah shoes,
Don' wais' nothin' I kin use ;
Ain' no slabe to grub or drink,
Ain' no miser, don' you think
Dat I is se'fish, kaze I's not ;
Glad to he'p dem whut ain' got.

Ten's mah church mos' all de time,
Ob each dollah gibs a dime;
Lubs to len' a he'pin' han'
To mos' airy 'zerbin' man.
Mah barn lof' plum' full ob hay,
Got a few cents tucked erway;
Sun ain' gwine to shine always,
Boun' to be some rainy days.

Jes' a word 'bout Emeline,
She dat faifful wife ob mine;
Putty, no sah! bless yore sole,
She's de las'in' kine whut hole;
Good an' hones' gal lak yores,
Heart ez big ez all out doors;
She kin cook, man! She kin bake
Co'nbread, taste lak angel cake.

I nevah brag on whut I own,
Sellem speak erbout mah home;
Six rooms, toilet, baf complete;
Koncrete cellahs, furnace heat.
All mah stock am fit an' fine,
Ain' fur frum de tractshun line;
Dar's no finah place erroun',
An' bless you, paid fo' ebah poun'.

You notice how dem wid de mos'
Has no time to brag or boas',
While dem dat jes' do barlee lib,
Plenty free etvice kin gib;
Aldough I's shame to menshun it,
I's 'cumulated quite a bit;
I's room to brag ez sho' yo's born
But I's no han' to blow mah horn.

“Don't discord; if you can't harmonize, don't sing.”

“Death is but a tunnel between Life uncertain and Life everlasting.”

PRICE HILL

W'en I wuz jes a little lad
 On de Hill;
I cut pranks bof good an' bad,
 On de Hill;
In de "Rabbit Grass," or lot,
Or some uddah precious spot,
Far too deah, to be fo'got;
 On de Hill.

Aftah while thin's grew rail dry,
 On de Hill;
Same ole cronnies, woods, an' sky,
 On de Hill;
Huntin' fo' de busy whirl,
I w'en out into de worl',
Lef' mah muddah, an' mah girl;
 On de Hill.

I seed thin's I nevah seen,
 On de Hill;
Lak de grass I sho wor green,
 On de Hill;
W'en dey opened up mah eyes,
Made me sho nuff worl'ly wise,
I cud miss de tendah ties,
 On de Hill.

A feelin' cum I nevah had
 On de Hill;
I nevah thought ob feelin' bad,
 On de Hill;
Feets hanged heavy in dair track,
Helf an' strength begun to crack;
Mighty glad to amble back,
 On de Hill.

I find honey in de breeze,
On de Hill;
Find rail 'holesome rest an' ease,
On de Hill;
Dar is somethin' I cain't tell,
Gibs me hopes ob gettin' well,
Mebbe its de home lak smell,
On de Hill.

ALMIGHTY GOD

If God is not, then who is He.
Who reigns above, majestically,
Who sees us through the night and day,
Who leads us safely all the way?

Who makes the moon shine from afar,
Who controls each twinkling star,
Who gives us day, and who the night,
Who fills the sun with radiant light?

Who placed the coolness in the breeze,
Who hung the fruit upon the trees,
Who put the fish in yonder brook,
Who planted wild flowers in the nook?

Who fills the field with golden grain,
Who causes draught, who sends the rain,
Who towers the lofty mountains high,
Who made the earth, the sea, and sky?

Who sends the rushing rivers on,
Who gave the little bird his song,
Who scattered islands in the sea,
Who gave this life to you and me?

If God is not, then who is He—
E'er at the helm doth pilot thee?
Who destines us as on we plod?
'Tis just Thy power, Almighty God!

A LETTER

Mearch de fiff, nineteen an' two ;
Mah Honey Babe : How does you do ?
Wid pen in han' I drops a line,
To let you know I's feelin' fine,
An' ast you, how's yore Maw an' Paw,
Yore Bruddah, an' yore Sister'n-law ?

I's gitin' on right well out heah,
Ob co'se I misses you, mah deah ;
But I works on an' grin an' grin,
Kaze time ain' long ez it has been,
An' fo' long yo'll be heah wid me—
Mrs. Jasper Amos Lee !

I 'fess, I sometimes hab de blues,
So w'en you writes, tell all de news ;
A hearin' 'bout de folks frum you,
Sorta he'ps a fellah thoo ;
Tell me who's up an' who am down,
An' all erbout de deah ole town.

Ain't nothin' much out heah to do,
Etcept to sit an' dream ob you ;
Jes dream ob you an' Tennessee,
De faires' ob de fair to me ;
Mah mine an' heart am evah dair,
Po'tected by yore lubin care.

'Speck I'll close, it's gitin' late,
Please ancer et en early date ;
Gib kine regards to all de res',
Do wid mah lub whut you knows bes',
Be a good gal, dream ob me,
Frum yore faifful, Jasper Lee.

P. S.—Sadday's yore berfday,
Somethin' rail nice on de way ;
'Tain't no dimon' lanvenleer,
But yo'll prize it jes ez deah ;
An' Hon, dem crosses stan' fo' kisses,
In de place ob dose I misses.

EASTER MORN'

Merry bells since daybreak pealed,
The sun is shining bright;
Fair lillies blooming in the field
Bedeck the earth in white.
Sweet strains from a distant choir
Fall softly on my ear,
The Anthem sets my soul afire
With Easter's loving cheer.

I'm wafted back long years ago
To where my Savior died;
To save soul from eternal woe,
The Lord was crucified.
I seem to see the silent tomb,
Where Redeemer lay,
'Till angels had dispelled the gloom
And rolled the stone away.

I venture to the entrance dim,
I seek Him in His prison,
An angel's voice speaks from within,
"Behold, the Lord is risen!"
With joy all earth and heaven sing.
Bid trumpeters proclaim,
All hail! unto the risen King,
The Savior lives again!

FAITH

Where I was before here I came, I know not;
Nor does it worry me now that I am;
But where I go when here I leave, puzzles me;
The groping in that vast uncertainty.

O! seething brain, dispel all thoughts of fear;
Borrow not from doubt those dreams so weird;
Go! buckle on your coat of faith and with a trust renewed,
Unflinchingly embrace eternity!

MUDDAH WIT

Whar I growed up dar wor no school,
 'twuz je' a lonesome wood ;
An' all de learnin' dat I got,
 I got bes' way I c'u'd ;
By watchin' rail close now an' den
 I'd cotch a little bit,
An' den I'd add some commin' senses,
 erlong wid muddah wit.

I nevah had no Gogofee, ain'
 seed no Rifmatick,
To 'splain de layin' ob de lan',
 an' how to count up quick ;
But, w'en I wuz jes' 'bout so big,
 mebbe a leetle biggah,
Mah muddah wit cum to mah
 aid, an' learnt me how to figgah.

I ain' had no Victroll to show
 me how to sing,
Nor music book wid lines an'
 dots, an' dat ar' sort a t'ing ;
Sitin' neaf de parlah windah, I
 would ketch de words rail soon,
Den muddah wit would cum erlong
 an' 'sply me wid de tune.

Dat eddiecashun sho am fine,
 I's willin' to etmit ;
Still, I conten's you ain' much force,
 wid out yore muddah wit ;
'Sides, dar is 'hole heaps dat you learn,
 dat's writ in no man's books ;
An' some dat don' know, A frum B ;
 make mighty fus' class cooks.

THE GARDEN OF LIFE

We must work well the soil in the Garden of Life,
From the best in our store we must sow ;
With love's honest toil
We must then till the soil
So the fruit of our labor will show.

With pure, honest thoughts let us fertilize,
From fond loving hearts, irrigate ;
With care, let us hoe
Every row as we go ;
Let us uproot the rank weed of hate.

When "harvest time" comes and the golden grain's ripe,
For a duty well done, He will bless us ;
And sweet flowers we grew
Will be waiting, 'tis true,
At the end of the road to refresh us.

THE TOILER

Toil, toil, toil, the days goes by,
And what have I ?
A dull abode, a single loaf, a solid cot,
On which I lie.

Toil, toil, toil, 'till night shades fall ;
What have I won ?
A bit of rest, then rise to toil anew
'Neath blazing sun.

Toil, toil, toil, 'till honest sweat
In beads, upon my brow does stand ;
And my reward—a tattered coat,
A cobbled shoe, a blistered hand.

On I will toil, a willing toiler ;
In usefulness true worth is shown ;
Had I not better wear out toiling,
Than to rust, an idle drone ?

"Perseverance is the mother of success."

COFFEE GROUN' CHLOE

Sebenth daughtah ob de sebenth,
Born beneaf de mistick vail;
On lebenth day ob month de lebenth,
Marked wid signs dat nevah fail.
She kin tell yore future histree,
'Deed, dar's nothin' she doan know,
An' de darkist hidden mistree,
Ain' no mistree 'tall to Chloe.

FIGHTING TIME

I care not for the clash of steel,
Nor, for a blood drenched battlefield;
I find no music in the cannon's roar,
I do not fancy shrieking shell,
That falls, to burst a blinding Hell;
Would I might dwell in peace for evermore.

Although peace loving, I admit,
I also boast some sand and grit,
And hate a coward like a coiling snake.
A man is no man who won't fight
When Honor, Freedom, Home and Right,
And Liberty and Justice are at stake.

GINOLIGY

I's sebenty-two an' feelin' good,
Kin jump plum' off de groun';
Does enythin' I evah could,
Speals now an' den up town;
De tem'pence folks maik et appeah
Lak it's a powahful sin;
Jes let em rave, I has no feah!
To-night, I talks on Gin.

I minds mah bissness all de time,
Don' bothah nary soul ;
Mah disposishun sho am fine,
Mah hearts ez pure ez gold.
I nevah tries to gib etvice,
Jes does de bes' I kin ;
An' nevah argues 'bout de price,
De gin man ast fo' Gin.

I does not borrie, nevah len',
Tries hard to do whut's right ;
I knows I is mah own bes' fren' ;
An' keeps dat fack in sight.
W'en Small Pox circlin' roun' erbout
An' Moanah's in de win',
I 'tects mahse'f fo' I goes out
By takin' on some Gin.

Gin am a tonic, good an' true,
Sho brace you up, alright !
But, ef it gits de bes' ob you,
Yo's in a sad, sad plight ;
So, ef you kain't kintrol yorese'f,
Stop now ! fo' you begin ;
An' leabs dat bottle on de she'f,
You dar not fool mid Gin !

I always keeps it ni' et han',
De vera bes' dat's sold,
Kaze it has he'ped a many man,
Breaks up a rail bad cold ;
An' ef you taiks a sip et night,
You nevah will grow thin,
Yo'll fine Gin deals wid you alright,
Ef you deals right wid Gin.

DE TES'

At a hi' tone berfday party,
Giben fo' Miss Winnie Lane,
Lonnie Johnson, Winnie s sweetheart,
Mist his bran' new watch an' chain.
Backed his se'f up in de do'way,
Grim determin' on his face;
Sed, "he mus' hab his belongin's
'Fo'e a sole c'u'd leab de place."

"I ain't got it!" Jeff Blue shouted.
"You kin search me," Dode Smif sed.
Some de uddahs got ixcited,
Uddahs stood an' shuck dai'r head.
Den up speaks ole Bruddah Homah,
"I kin stan' it! kin de res'?"
Fetch de roostah an' de ine pot
An' we'll all go thoo de tes'.

Right erway de hostess, Winnie,
Furm de kitchen brung a pot;
In de meantime, Winnie's Pappy
Ushered in his prize Wine Dot.
Den Bur Homah sed, "de Scriptahs
Tole how Petah cum to grief,
An' dat ebah liben' roostah
Knowed a liar an' a thief."

Put de roostah 'neaf de ine pot,
In de middle ob de flo';
W'en de thievin' villin tech it
Dat ar bird am boun' to cro'.
Fall in line an' put de light out,
Start to marchin' frum de spot;
An' let ebah body passin'
Lay a han' erpon de pot.

Aftah dey had all marched by it,
Bruddah Homah lit de light;
Ast dem hole dair han' pams upward,
So de charm c'u'd work out right.
Den, he sed, "de roostah tells me
Jeff Blue am de guilty man,
An' he knows it jes bekazen
Dar's no smut erpon his han'."

LITTLE GIRL

Tears are falling, I am sad,
 Little Girl;
You were everything I had.
 Little Girl;
To your grave alone, I steal,
Bare my head and humbly kneel,
While I tell Him how I feel,
 Little Girl.

Every joy on earth in one,
 Little Girl;
Sweetheart, wife, companion, chum,
 Little Girl;
Seems I see your dear face still,
Seems I feel that same old thrill,
I believe I always will,
 Little Girl.

Ere long He will call me, too,
 Little Girl;
Call me Home, to Him, and you,
 Little Girl;
Everlasting peace we'll share,
Free from sorrow, pain and care:
There will be no parting there,
 Little Girl.

EMANCIPATORS

Black America! In Fame's Hall go place
 This group: where naught can e'er erase
A single noble character, or dim one glorious deed;
For they were sowers of the seed—
John Brown, at Harper's Ferry, amid his gallant boys;
Elijah Lovejoy, who gave all, at Alton, Illinois;
And Lincoln, martyred Lincoln! Felled by a traitor's
 blow;
Douglass, Phillips, Garrison,
and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

LATE DAY CHILLEN

It's purfeck scanluss how de chillen
Pleges de oldah folks now days;
Go way w'en you mos' do need em,
Go way an' jes stays, an' stays.
Why! de younstars run yore bissness,
Bosses you an' dat's a fack,
Tells you whut dey will an' won't do,
Han's you up back talk an' slack.

I sent Samson to de grocery,
Sakes alibe! dat boy am slo';
'Speck he's somewhar playin' marbles,
Me heah; mah han's in de dough.
'Sides, I tole him fo' to hurry
Wid de shortnin' fo' de bread,
See him creepin' yondah, don't you,
Lak a snake whut's 'bout to shed.

Boy! pick up dem feets yo's dragin',
Cum arunin' w'en I calls!
Ef I has to git behine you,
I'll unseat dem obbah halls;
Is you got dem thin's I tole you?
Yas! is dat whut you sed, Sam?
Guess I'll taik you to de smoke house,
See ef you kain't say, yas mam.

Mammy lak, I lub mah chillen,
Does all airy mammy c'u'd,
W'en I scold em or correck em,
It am fo' to do em good;
Dey say: "I is antdelouvin,
An' dat dey's frum modern schools,"
But, I tells em sometimes learnin'
Turns sma't Ellicks into fools.

Wondah whar mah baby, Linda?
Look up yondah et de clock!
Ni' two hours since school has lef' out
An' it's jes erroun' de block;
Dat chile spiled kaze she de baby,
She thinks she is cute an' smart,
Dough I doesn' lak to do it,
I mus' stop her, fo' she start.

Arabella, jes' turned sixteen,
Growed up lady, havin' bows;
Runnin' roun' in dead ob wintah
Mos' time wid out propah kloze;
Dat gal am so' hi' fo'lutin',
She calls cookin' "mestic-signs,"
W'en she quit her job las' Toosday,
She sed, "Boss man, I resigns!"

Chillen now is fresh an' fo'stee,
Gals is women w'en deys ten;
Boys dat jes am twelve an' thirteen,
Smokes an' chews de same ez men;
W'en I see 'em blundah bustin',
I jes turns mah head an' smile,
Kaze I knows dese se'f same chillen
Be de ole folks aftah while.

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RAY G. DANDRIDGE.

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